SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

The South Vietnamese people's right to self-defence

SELF-DEFENCE is a right as old as the hills. It is the obligatory corollary to such "unalienable rights" as "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" which the 1776 US Declaration of Independence affirmed that "all Men"... "are endowed by their Creator with."

Since as early as the Middle Age, there has been a distinction between unjust wars and just wars. A war of aggression or conquest is one of the former. To the latter's category belongs any war against foreign aggression or conquest.

Any national liberation war is just, no matter when it breaks out, since it springs from the resistance to oppression and is an act of self-defence against an injustice which drags out. Thus the right to self-defence of the nations has soon become a basic principle of the law of the nations or international law.

Closer to our time, the United Nations Charter stipulates in its Article 51 that "nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence."

In recognizing the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination described as "sacred, unalienable" by Article 9-a, the Paris Agreement has postulated that the Vietnamese people as a whole have the right to defend their national rights and the South Vietnamese people that to retaliate any damage to their self-determination right.

For more than 9 months since the signing of the Paris Agreement, more than 4 months since the publication of the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, the Thieu administration or more accurately the US administration through the latter's agency, has never ceased waging war upon the South Vietnamese with US arms and with the help of a horde of 20,000 "advisors" and military personnel in civvies.

Such "civilianization" has only been a facet of the "Vietnamization" of the war, reaffirmed in the San Clemente Joint Communiqué and Thieu's subsequent fiery utterances.

In point of fact, the Thieu regime has not ceased mounting inroads into the PRG zone and police raids in its territory. Provocations upon provocations have been staged, in a deliberate sabotage of the Paris Agreement. Saigon planes have been wantonly bombing PRG areas into "free fire zone." Between October 16 and 20, 1973 alone, these came under 173 bombing and reconnaissance sorties, and 162 artillery strikes. On October 23, 1973 *AFP* confirmed that "last week, Saigon Air Force jets flew 100 missions a day, over 'communist' positions 60 kilometres from Saigon."

In its zone, Saigon soldiers and police have been firing at the people without let-up, making massive arrests, pillaging paddy and other property, under the "pacification" program. Right in Saigon, on October 13, 1973, police nabbed 63 youths at the "Republic Stadium" and in Tran Quoc Toan Avenue. The next day, they gave chase to other youngsters in the streets and cut down Nguyen Tan Loc who lived in Lane 134, Van Don Avenue.

Such atrocities were committed right at the moment when Thieu ordered his army to "take the first step", to "mount pre-emptive action" and sent substantial troop and material reinforcements to Pleiku, the Seven Mounts area, Tay Ninh, etc. Saigon troops have been confined to their barracks around the capital and placed under strict control. 14 so-called "defence" shock groups have been set up while militia and "people's self-defence" have been merged into brigades and a new air division has received its combat standard.

Thieu is still persisting in his refusal to return Vietnamese civilian personnel still detained by him. The political prisoners have been inflicted unspeakable horrors in prison. The Two-Party Consultative Conference has been marking time because of Saigon representatives' obstruction.

Such circumstances have placed the PRG and the entire South Vietnamese people in a position of self-defence. The PLAF have been complying with the Paris Agreement and the twice stipulated cease-fire, but in virtue of the former and the Joint Communiqué, they cannot stand idle without failing in their duty to protect the people's life and property and the free zone explicitly recognized in the peace negotiations. Harsh punishment has been meted out to the aggressors proportionately to their offences. In one day, October 23, 1973, nearly two hundred of them were wiped out in Chu Nghe sector, west of Pleiku. More than one hundred others were knocked out of combat during their thrust into Dong Da, Tay Ninh province. Unlawful occupiers of Bach Ma (White Horse) height, Thua Thien province were kicked out. Three Saigon planes raiding the liberated areas, Western sources reported, were downed in a few days, including one F.5 and one L.19 in Bien Hoa and one chopper in Lam Dong.

To give the lie to US and its Saigon agents' charges of "communist" troop concentrations for large-scale offensives, acts of self-defence can be cited by the South Vietnamese, which right derives from the Paris Agreement, fully conforms to international law and should not be confined to the site of aggression but can be extended to its starting bases.

The PRG, PLAF and South Vietnamese people have so far exerted utmost self-control in deference to the principles of the Paris Agreement but they are firmly resolved to counter any land-grabbing operation, on the spot and in its starting, supplying or supporting bases.

The US and Saigon must expect ripostes as hard as, and even harder than in Chu Nghe, Dong Da and Bach Ma, if they continue their encroachments on our territory.

Within its own zone, the Saigon rule cannot go on committing atrocities in the teeth of popular wrath. All oppression breeds popular resistance and here it is not out of place to remind Nixon and Thieu of the famous passage of the American Declaration of Independence on each government's objectives, i.e. the people's "unalienable rights": "whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

An alternative is facing the Nixon administration and Saigon regime: either respect and strictly abide by the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué or continue its deliberate sabotage which has already damaged too much the Peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia, US honour and US vital interests.

US and world opinion has been alerted. Its feeling has been running high against US-Thieu breaches of the Paris Agreement and it has recognized the South Vietnamese people's self-defence.

The "thief crying stop thief" trick no longer works. Those guilty of heinous war crimes in South Viet Nam will not gain anything, juridically speaking, by undermining the accords duly concluded and internationally endorsed in Paris. International perjury has always been regarded as an offence. The accumulation of criminal deeds will only compound the political and penal responsibility of the offenders and bring nearer their well-deserved penalty.

Highlanders return to their homes and fields

A letter from Ho Nai

Even grass is lacking

THE Nguyen Van Thieu administration continues to commit heinous crimes against political prisoners: it mixes them up by transferring them from one jail to another — some of them have disappeared for good. They have been manhandled and tortured and arbitrarily tried by drumhead courts martial.

New prisons have been built in remote places for political detainees sent in from such big penal establishments as Con Dao, Bien Hoa, Thu Dau Mot, Tan Hiep... In 2 months only (September and October 1973) 3,000 inmates of Con Dao and other jails were transferred to Ho Nai prison (Bien Hoa). Many of them have been imprisoned from 15 to 18 years and to continual torture without being tried by any court; many others whose terms expired three years ago are still in jail and put to the third degree.

At Ho Nai, the prisoners are frequently left without food. If they are fed at all, their meals consist only of mouldy rice and salt and a very inadequate quantity of drinking water. As they are ravenously hungry, the prisoners have to eat grass, but even this is lacking. At Ho Nai, the political prisoners are subjected five times a day to such atrocities as: electric shock, burning, liming, soapy water, dazzling light, flesh carving, skin slashing, tooth extracting, knee-cap, arm-bone and jaw-bone breaking, hanging till unconsciousness.

The political detainees are labelled "rioters" and "rebels" and are savagely brutalized as such. On September 11, 1973, at Ho Nai, the jailers fired three times at the prisoners, causing many casualties; the wounded were sent to hospitals as "emergencies" but never returned.

Among the casualties were Le Hong Thanh (Saigon), Nguyen Van Tanh (Da Nang), Nguyen Kim Boi (Ben Tre) Huynh Van Thuy (Ben Tre), Tran Long Phuoc (Thu Dau Mot), Yang Y (High Plateaux), Trieu Cong Tich (Hue).

At Ho Nai, the political prisoners live in a unheard-of hell. The repression is so harsh that it is threatening to degenerate into a slaughter of political detainees as at O Mon (Can Tho).

Such a horror is not an isolated case, but part of a systematic plan of the Nguyen Van Thieu administration. Nguyen Van Ve, the jailer of Con Dao has asserted that "the Paris Agreement is not valid. Torturing, detention and massacring of prisoners is the right of the Thieu administration. Mr Thieu has reminded us many times that you are a force redoubted by the Republic of Viet Nam and so are to be disposed of."

The bloody crimes of the Nguyen Van Thieu clique are offences to the dignity of the patriots, peace loving people and those who sacrifice themselves to build the country into an independent, peaceful, unified and beautiful country.

In the long years of sufferings under the penitentiary regime of the US-Thieu clique, we have seen their true colours and are resolved to defend our dignity and to do our bits in the people's effort to achieve national independence, democracy, peace and neutrality...

Ho Nai, October 10, 1973

For the 3,000 political detainees
at Ho Nai Prison

LE PHUOC ANH,
NGUYEN TRUNG THU,
VO VAN TUNG

Stop the murderers' hands

BEFORE the Paris Agreement was signed, the Thieu administration, under US advisors' command, had tried to give political prisoners the status of common ones. It has also committed massacres right in prison camps, which took a toll of thousands of inmates. The repression of political prisoners has increased in intensity ever since, and every effort has been made by Thieu to deny their existence.

In February, 4,500 political prisoners were brought to an open air detention camp enclosed by barbed wire and watch-towers in Vam Co, along the O Mon River, Can Tho province. Daily exposure to the sun or rain, and savage torture have inflicted heavy casualties on them. For some time now, the guards have made a practice of dropping the corpses of the victims into the Tien, Hau and Tan Duong Rivers, where dozens of naked, headless, armless or legless corpses can be seen floating downstreams every day. Strict orders have been given that under no circumstances these bodies be fished out and buried.

The inmates of Ho Nai (Bien Hoa province) prison — many have been brought from Poulo Condor and other places in the past few months—now number around 3,000. They are subjected to savage beatings, and are given only 2 bowls of mouldy rice and a sprinkle of salt a day. Many have had to eat grass. What with hunger, what with rampant diseases, their lives are in great jeopardy. Prisoners, besides, are barred from all contacts with their families.

Pretexting a "revolt" the guards at Tan Hiep prison, Bien Hoa, on Sept. 11 assaulted detainees with machine-gun fire andgrenades, killing or wounding many.

Despite a high mortality rate the number of prisoners has been fast increasing. Some 3,000 people were arrested during the raids on Hoai Nhon and Phu My districts (Binh Dinh), Son Tinh district (Quang Ngai), and Dien Ban and Duy Xuyen districts, (Quang Nam), in September alone.

The Saigon administration is continuing to sow death and sorrow in South Viet Nam, in the cities and the countryside alike. The people of South Viet Nam again denounce its horrors to the public at home and abroad, and appeal for strong actions to stay the murderers' hands.

Saigon bombing protested

THE military delegation of the RSVN PRG to the Central Two-Party JMC sent on Nov. 1st a note to the IC Chairman demanding it to investigate into the Saigon administration's continual bombing of the PRG-controlled area in Trang Trang.

The note pointed out: From October 19 to 21, 1973, aircraft of the Saigon administration many times bombed Trang Trang area lying deep into resistance zone D., a long-time revolutionary base north of Saigon. On October 25, 8 sorties of AD.6 aircraft bombed Trang Trang and the following day another 12 sorties of AD.6 and A. 37 planes again attacked this area, causing big losses to the population.

Peasants against rice looting

THIEU'S rice-grabbing campaign dated back as late as April this year. More than once he has said that "rice is a strategic commodity" and that "a grain of rice equals an ammunition round."

These last days he has deployed a huge force of troops, police and tax collectors to step up the drive, and peasants have been forced to declare their rice and put whatever they have in their barns under "government control." Rice mills have been ordered to slow down, and peasants must sell their rice dirt cheap and are prevented from freely disposing of the yields of their lands.

3 battalions of the Saigon 7th Division broke on August 29 into Nhon Ninh and Tan Hoa villages, Kien Truong district, and robbed the peasants of the rice they had just brought in. Late in September, police and security agents in the capital of Ben Tre province sacked the Dan Sinh rice mill, and early this month, they dispossessed My Hung villagers of 4 tons of paddy. Thieu's agents have also boasted that in the first twenty days of September they seized as much as 20 tons of paddy and 14 tons of husked rice from peasants in Chau Doc province.

This daylight robbery has increased the misery of the peasants in Saigon-controlled zone. Not a few in Chau Doc and Can Tho have committed suicide out of desperation. In Gia Dinh and Tay Ninh, there have been cases of whole families killing themselves. A sergeant of the Saigon army in the capital of Can Tho has taken his own life and that of his wife and his five children by putting poison in their pot of rice soup. Hundreds of people have died of hunger in Phuoc Binh and Dong Xoai districts, Binh Phuoc province, and thousands of inmates of concentration camps in Khanh Hoa and Long Khanh have turned beggars. Manioc and maize have been eaten for rice in many a family in Western Nam Bo (South Viet Nam proper — *Ed.*) and Central Nam Bo. According to a report by the Saigon Lower House, poorly fed peasants in Western Nam Bo are too weak to fight the present drought and output of this harvest is expected to drop by 60 or even 70 percent. This will also have a bad effect on the 1974 crops.

The robbers, however, have met with stiff resistance from the peasants. Those in Kien Tuong, My Tho, Ben Tre and Vinh Long provinces have fought back resolutely while helping one another put their rice out of the reach of the pirates. Peasants have defended their property with every means, arguments and even sticks. In quite a number of places, they have won the sympathy and support of Saigon soldiers.

Meanwhile in the liberated zone, peasants, with the assistance of guerillas, are working against time to bring in their crops while getting ready for possible raids by the Saigon army. In Gia Dinh and Can Tho provinces, a good number of rice-looters have been punished very severely.

In the Mekong River delta, peasants have made it a point not to let the Saigon administration lay hands on the 40 tons of paddy it has planned to reap the last quarter of 1973.

Thieu clamours for war

BETWEEN January 28 and October 20, 1973, there were 266,266 violations of the cease-fire by the Saigon administration: 32,473 encroachment operations, 183,054 "pacification" raids, 33,991 artillery shellings and 11,748 air recon and bombing missions on the liberated zone of South Viet Nam. Between October 6 and 20, these cases numbered 8,530 including 410 inroads, 7,480 "pacification" raids, 176 shellings, 247 recon and bombing sorties. In addition 17 commando raids were launched by the Saigon army.

In the last eight months, the Saigon army set up 70 posts, dropped 18,628 CBUs, napalm bombs, 15,000-pounders, toxic bombs, bomb-clusters, and lobbed 443,880 shells on the liberated areas of Binh Dinh province, killing hundreds of civilians.

On October 20, 1973, addressing 1,077 cadets at the Thu Duc military academy, Thieu called on his army to "wipe out the grass-roots" and "stage an economic blockade" of the PRG. After launching a smear campaign against the latter, he gave orders to his forces to "act pre-emptively," to "take the initiative in action" and to "strike first."

Thieu's bellicose utterances at Thu Duc again showed his frenzied opposition to the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué, to peace and national reconciliation and concord in South Viet Nam. But he who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind.

A battle against land-grabbers

ONE morning in early Autumn 1973. No sooner had the tomtom calling the children to school stopped than shooting rang at the entrance of the hamlet.

A major Saigon force covered by tanks, armoured cars, aircraft and gun-boats as well as artillery sited in Tam Quan, De Duc and Bong Son launched an all-out assault on village H., Hoai Nhon district, Binh Dinh province.

The idea was to occupy by a coup village H. as a spring board to push into other villages west of Hoai Nhon. The assailing force, in a pincers movement, encircled hamlet Q. from which they would fan out to capture Highway Dat Do. But a short distance after it set out the first prong ran into a mine field laid by the guerillas and lost an entire scout platoon. The second prong, escorted by armoured cars, made straight for the battleground of the Liberation Army. The leading tank took a direct B.40 hit from Tran Quoc Thien. This was followed by a sustained automatic gun fire from Liberation soldiers and guerillas who quickly surrounded the Saigon infantrymen. Many of the latter were killed instantly, and the rest fled into cover behind the armoured cars.

From their post a good distance away the commanders of the operation bellowed their orders to the infantry and artillery, exhorting them on. However, no one dared to cross the dense fire network by the liberation army and guerillas of village H.

A day of fierce fighting played havoc in the village. The school in the centre of hamlet Q. and hundreds of homes newly built after the cease-fire were burnt down or demolished. Groves of coconut trees were uprooted and denuded. Many paddyfields nearing harvest were ploughed up. But the inhabitants of village H. did not lose heart, instead grew more determined than ever to make the land-grabbers pay for their crimes. That was also the feeling of the defending combatants of the liberation army.

The battle entered its second, third, then fourth day. The whole 41st regiment and two armoured squadrons were thrown into the fray under strict orders to capture village H. at any cost. However, they were no match for the combatants and people in the village who won one engagement after another, each one bigger than the last. Within a few days, 700 Saigon troops were put out of action, and 30 tanks and armoured cars destroyed. They also took prisoner more than 30 Saigon men whom they treated with kindness and helped to return to their families.

As soon as gunfire stopped the local administration helped the population quickly restore their life to normal. Building materials, rice and salt were distributed to each stricken family.

After consolidating the shelters and gun fortifications with a great sense of urgency and exchanging experience on the fight, the combatants and guerillas immediately went about to help rebuild people their bombed-out homes and construct a new school for the children.

A week later, the tomtom again resounded. On the ricefields of Hoai Nhon, groups of peasants hurriedly brought in their harvest of early rice. At crossroads, groups of men and women guerillas, gun at the ready, proudly kept watch and ward over the hard-won gains of the revolution.

HAI DA

The third segment—an irrefutable reality

THOUGH gruelling and protracted, the South Vietnamese revolutionary struggle has been advancing step by step. And its most decisive success for the people and most indicative of the failure of the US and its agents was the signing of the Paris Agreement on January 27, 1973.

The process of the successful effort of the South Vietnamese as well as that of the futile endeavour of the US and the Saigon administration has at the same time been one of deep differentiation inside the political forces in the zone under Saigon control, more particularly in Saigon and other South Vietnamese towns.

A retrospective survey of the past 20 years of US direct intervention in South Viet Nam shows the existence of not a few individuals and groups who first sided with the US then opposed it, collaborated with Diem then fought against him, ganged up with Thieu then resisted him.

Who were they? And why did such a thing happen?

First of all, it should be pointed out that they were people of rank and fashion who were in a position to be in the know politically.

They were senators and representatives of the Saigon Parliament, ministers of the Saigon administration, generals and officials of the ARVN, political personalities, journalists, lawyers, physicians, religious dignitaries, catholic priests or leaders of mass organizations.

Now, what turned them adversaries of the US and Thieu? The cause was two-fold. If US brutal violence accompanied by setbacks and the Vietnamese people's immense sacrifices attended by successes awakened the conscience of the progressive mankind, they also gave food for thought to those people. They came to realize that US-advocated anti-Communism only means, in the last resort, the thorough destruction of their beloved country and that the US-advertized "freedom" is in fact the trampling upon their countrymen's human dignity.

And the Viet Cong depicted as medieval barbarians proved to be genuine exponents of the national spirit, Vietnamese humanism and the age-old ancestral traditions of greater interest was the fact that those people wearing canvas-hats, tyre sandals, sleeping in the open on the ground and going on foot, had got the better of a 1,200,000-strong sophisticated army equipped with the most modern weapons in the world.

Let one however guard against the simplistic inference that all those who are enemies of the US and Thieu are friends of the National Front for Liberation or the Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces. The complexity of the present juncture could not be unraveled in a few lines. Suffice it to take note that with the differentiating process going on, the number of these people increases and some of them say: "I do not stand for communism but let no one force me to be an anti-communist advocate and when I am against fascist dictatorship, let nobody accuse me of communism".

Long before the Paris Agreement was signed, the NFL and the PRG of the RSVN had been already calling for national reconciliation and concord as a way of solving the Viet Nam problem between the Vietnamese themselves, on the basis of respect by the US for Viet Nam's national sovereignty and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. This spirit was reflected in Minister Nguyen Thi Binh's July 1, 1971 7-point proposal at the Paris Conference. The famous policy towards families of Saigon soldiers made known by the PRG in January 1972 was another eloquent expression of it. Especially in the January 27, 1973 Paris Agreement, the spirit of national reconciliation and concord is clear in many clauses but is obvious in the stipulation on the creation of the National Conncil for National Reconciliation and Concord comprising three equal components. Besides the PRG and the Saigon administration, there is also a third segment usually called the Third Force. It is a middle-of-the-road force standing on neither side. It does not have a unified organization while embracing all tendencies favourable to national reconciliation. By proclaiming its respect for the reality and recognition of different political inclinations, provided national independence and freedom are achieved, the NFL and the PRG do not want to monopolize patriotism and have always recognized the role of the Third Force in the settlement of South Viet Nam's internal problems. This good will attitude of theirs towards this social segment was clearly expressed in the April 25, 1973 6-point proposal and the June 28 clarification given by Minister Nguyen Van Hieu at La Celle Saint Cloud. Meanwhile, the Saigon administration has always sought to deny the existence of the third force, a signatory to the Paris Agreement and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué as it is. In the last eight months, simultaneously with his hysterical war cries, Nguyen Van Thieu has repeatedly contested the existence of the Third Force, declaring bluntly that it is nothing and does not play any role. Or, as Saigon Prime Minister Tran Thien Khiem put it, "if there is a third force, it only exists on paper".

While denying the reality of the third force, the Saigon administration has indulged in serious violations of the important clauses of the Paris Agreement: it is still detaining and torturing more than 200,000 political prisoners (many of whom belong to the third force), it is refusing to ensure the democratic liberties in the areas under its control (by outlawing among other things the activity of the third force), it has been launching pacification operations in an attempt to pen up the population, strengthening its coercive apparatus at grass-roots level, suppressing freedoms of speech and of the press and preventing the masses from voicing their support for the Third Force.

But the more violently Thieu opposes the third force, the more vigorously the latter continues to exist. Meanwhile the Saigon regime is disintegrating all the more swiftly, Thieu and his gang are all the more isolated and the third force becomes all the more vocal, thanks to the increasing support of the broad masses.

Confronted with the growing opposition of large masses of the towns-people and under the pressure of public opinion, Thieu was lately compelled to release a few political prisoners including students, intellectuals, trade-unionists living in the Saigon-controlled zone. This very limited gesture was aimed at appeasing the public and blunting the reaction of the third force. But what results has Thieu achieved? Opposition against him is growing fiercer. The students arbitrarily returned by him to the PRG go on denouncing the penitentiary regime of the Saigon administration, demanding their return to Saigon, their place of residence before their arrest. The freed trade-unionists continue to give the lie to Thieu's claim that the International Red Cross has acknowledged that the Chi Hoa prison regime is humane. Madame Ngo Ba Thanh, an outstanding figure of the Women's Movement for the Right to Live, recently released with a 20-kilo loss in weight is still a staunch and even more intransigent critic than two years ago, before she was jailed. Protests against Thieu's political attitude and economic policy are mounting. Thieu's greatest worry is the widening fissure which has developed in the Saigon State apparatus. A Senator of the Saigon Senate who had just ended his 6-year term declared:

"I'm happy to leave Parliament and at the same time this Saigon regime, for during my 6-year term. I felt more ashamed than honoured."

And as long as Thieu refuses to recognize the legal activity of the third force and keeps denying its indispensable role in the settlement of South Viet Nam's internal problems, such strong words and deeds will still be heard and seen.

NGUYEN KHAC

LE DUC THO and the NOBEL Prize

THE Nobel Prize Committee has recently decided to bestow the 1973 Peace Prize on Mr Le Duc Tho, adviser of the DRVN delegation to the Paris Peace talks.

Mr Le Duc Tho sent on October 23 the following message to Mrs Aasz Lionaes, President of the Nobel Prize Committee :

"Over the past eighteen years, the US has waged a war of aggression against Viet Nam. The Vietnamese people have put up an extremely fierce and heroic patriotic resistance war against US aggression, for national independence and freedom. The whole progressive mankind have approved and supported their just cause.

The US imperialists have been defeated. The Paris Agreement on Viet Nam has been concluded. It constitutes a very great, epoch-making victory of the Vietnamese people as well as of peace- and justice-loving people throughout the world. It represents a great contribution of the Vietnamese people to the movement for national independence and to the cause of peace pursued by the people of all countries.

It is the consistent position of the Vietnamese people and the Government of the DRVN to resolutely and scrupulously implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and, at the same time, to demand that all other parties do the same, so as to maintain lasting peace in Viet Nam, and to contribute to the preservation of peace in Viet Nam, in Southeast Asia and the world.

However, since the conclusion of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the US and the Saigon administration have continued to commit very serious violations of many essential provisions of the Agreement. The Saigon administration has, with US support and encouragement, carried on its war activities. Peace has not been really restored in South Viet Nam. Under such circumstances, I feel it impossible to accept the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize that the Committee has bestowed on me. When the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam is respected, guns are silenced, and peace is really restored in South Viet Nam, I will consider the acceptation of this Prize.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Committee and to renew to you the assurances of my high consideration."

Le Duc Tho has also written, expressed his thanks, and explained his views on the Prize conferred on him to the various international organizations and public figures that have sent him their congratulations.

The European Arch : Yugoslavia

THE only European country visited by the PRG delegation, Yugoslavia, was the third stop-over in their tour after the Algiers Non-Aligned Summit. Credited with having fought with arms in hand to liberate themselves, the Yugoslavs feel very proud of the battle on Avala Hill in the suburbs of Belgrade. With its strategic position, the height will give any occupier command over the neighbouring areas. The fascists had a firm hold of it but when the nine divisions of partisans started a powerful onslaught on Belgrade, wiped out the adverse 15,000-strong force and reoccupied the hill, Hitler's aggression against Yugoslavia was virtually brought to an end.

On top of Avala stands a memorial with an Unknown Soldier's tomb in the middle. The statues of four female guerillas guard the entrance, symbolizing the four nationalities of Yugoslavia. The monument, made entirely of red marble, is a work of art by a reputed Yugoslav sculptor. Right after his arrival in Belgrade Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho laid a wreath at the Unknown Soldier's tomb and signed his name in the visitors' book.

THE Yugoslav people take pride in their guerilla warfare whose famous hero, a native of Zagorje, some 50 miles from Zagreb, Capital the Croatian Republic, was none other than present-day Marshall Tito, Yugoslavia's President.

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho visited the small village of Zagorje. Starting from Zagreb, we had to ride through a dusty road section. At the rumble of our cars, peasants and children gathered in large numbers in front of a two-flat house under the wide foliage of a very old tree.

The Yugoslavs still treasure Tito's native home and such household articles in it as a maize mill, a baking oven... The local population hold visitors to their village in high regard, all the more so after they had been told that the visitor that day was the leader of the National Front for Liberation, Head of the Republic of South Viet Nam, who had contributed to the organization and direction of the South Vietnamese people's legendary resistance to American aggression.

The crowd thickened and clapped their hands as Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho stepped out of the house. The applause lasted until his car went out of sight at dusk.

The Yugoslav people entertain particular warm sympathy for the Vietnamese, for their fight for national salvation. This could be seen in their hand-wavings, their cheers, their eyes, the words uttered by townspeople on pavements as we rode past.

We witnessed the same tokens of affection in Belgrade as in Zagreb, Pula and elsewhere. We arrived in the capital after nightfall. Though we were an hour late and though it rained, school children, cadres, workers flocked into the streets waiting for us with RSVN's and Yugoslavia's flags in their hands. Others appeared at their windows, clapping or waving their hands on our passage. Many shouted : Viet Nam ! Viet Nam !

Zagreb reserved a similar welcome for the PRG delegation. Virtually all school children took to the streets. Post office workers, shop assistants and customers alike came out to welcome us along the pavements. The crowd swelled as we drew nearer to the city. Plenty of cars had to stop at crossroads. Passengers alighted, came to us and greeted us merrily.

The plane trip from Zagred to Pula took 45 minutes. From the airport to the town we rode between thick lines of flag-waving men, women and children. There was a sea of people at Istra wharf where the delegation boarded a boat for Brioni island. It seemed that Pula's entire population turned out to greet their guests. They had put on beautiful dresses and kerchiefs whose colours and those of flags looked still more brilliant in the morning sunshine. Under a blue sky, on the shore of a sea with magnificent waters PRG and Yugoslav flags fluttered together in the wind.

THE voyage from Pula to Brioni lasted 40 minutes. President Tito's private yatch, painted half white and half red, left the shore under the escort of three naval crafts. The reception to South Vietnamese guests from the Yugoslav government was as deferent as that from the people was cordial. The rituals reserved for a chief of state in Belgrade were repeated at the Brioni wharf. President Tito went up to the landing stage to welcome Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho whom he had met at the Non-Aligned summit in Algiers. He showed him and Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh into a light-grey open car that he himself drove to the Guest House.

Standing on the verandah and pointing to the sea waters, President Tito said to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho :

"The waters of our sea are limpid because they are not troubled by any American fleet."

Clad with pine trees Brioni island abounds with deers and stas reared in gardens. There are also elephants, lions, camels, zebras, etc. imported from other countries. President Tito keeps a garden of tropical trees. Brioni seems to be a paradise for elderly people. But here everyone works, including the President.

The Politbureau of the Yugoslav Communists' League was due to meet in Brioni after the delegation's departure. Already present on the island, the League's Secretary—Stane Dolanc — theorist Kardel and Vice-President Ribicik had also come to meet Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and the PRG delegation at the landing stage.

It was in Brioni that the South Vietnamese-Yugoslav summit took place. President Tito and other Yugoslav leaders paid special attention to how the Paris Agreement had been implemented and condemned Washington's and Saigon's crude violations. They showed readiness to back and help South Viet Nam impose a strict application of the accord as well as rehabilitate and reconstruct the liberated zone.

Yugoslavia has gone through many years of national reconstruction. Though differences still exist between town and country, a fairly prosperous life prevails in rural areas which look very picturesque. Rolling hills with gentle, grass-covered slopes resembled an immense green carpet. Flocks of grazing white and black sheep add a particular note to the extensive fields whose beauty was enhanced by scattered, deep blue, umbrella-like pine trees.

We traversed several rural agglomerations. Each family lived in a separate house, sometimes two-storey high, in an enclosure grown with pear or apple trees and a stack of straw by the side of which would stand a lorry or a car or at least a horse carriage. There is electricity for every household and very few are without a TV set.

The warmth displayed by our Yugoslav friends today was only one aspect of their support and overall assistance to our fight for national liberation. In Zagreb our delegation visited the electric motor-making factory named after a national hero, the partisan Rade Koncar, the first secretary of Croatia's Communist Party who had died in the liberation war. Workers held a welcome meeting right in a workshop for the delegation. On behalf of all his comrades, the secretary of the factory trade-union assured Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho of their resolute and unfailing support to the fight for liberation of the South Vietnamese people. Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho signed his name in the Guests' Book, just under the name of the late President Ho Chi Minh who had visited the factory in August 1957.

"Our factory receives only distinguished guests from fraternal countries," the factory director said. "Since President Ho Chi Minh's visit," he added, "Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho's is the first."

DURING our visit we came to realize how much the Yugoslavs and South Vietnamese have in common, like a deep attachment to national independence, peace, non-alignment and social progress.

A 21-gun salute and the strains of South Viet Nam's and Yugoslavia's anthems at Pula airport crowned the European stop-over of the PRG delegation in their long tour of friendship.

HUYNH VAN LY

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho explaining to President Tito and Yugoslavia's State leaders the vast liberated zone of the RSVN PRG

President Tito at Brioni wharf to welcome Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and the PRG delegation

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho, Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh and other members of the PRG delegation conferring in Brioni with President Tito, Vice-President Ribicik, and General Secretary of the Yugoslav Communists' League, Stane Dolanc

in the cities

o A hunger strike was staged on Oct. 23 by over 1,200 workers at the Phong Phu section of the Textile Company of SICOVINA. Their complaint was that the bosses were giving them only one fifth of the total monthly social allowance of 50,000 piastres. They demanded payment of the whole sum, which they were entitled to, and also high cost of living allowance, as contained in a claim put up by the Union of Cloth and Cotton Workers in July.

o More and more intellectuals including newly-graduated students in Saigon have become jobless. Besides, about half a million university and college students are now unable to support themselves, and many have dropped out to look for a job or even to join the army. It has become a practice with many a prudent students to send out applications for work before enrolment. "Unemployment among intellectuals has reached an alarming high," declared the Assistant Secretary of the Cultural-Education Council in Saigon. Only a very little number of the 20,000 university graduates have been able to land jobs so far.

o What Thieu gives with one hand, he takes back with the other. After failing to collect the income tax imposed on private schools, he has devised a new way to procure money with what he calls the "school tax." Private schools have to give up 10 percent of their income, effective from 1967, and for the number of students whose lists were submitted to the Ministry of Education and Youth early in the year. This tax has been denounced by many Saigonese as "absurd," "unfair."

o Small traders in all the 36 markets in Saigon still have to pay the toll, although this practice was formally dropped by the City Administration on July 6 this year. This has aroused vigorous protest from all quarters.

o Thieu has tabled a draft bill calling for heavy sentences ranging from 20 years' hard labour or confiscation of property to death penalty to any one guilty of "economic sabotage" or charged with giving "direct or indirect" assistance to "Communists." This has been exposed by the public as a flagrant violation of the Paris Agreement, and a move to help the Thieu administration dispossess people at will.

o There is a sharp competion among Saigonese youths to sell blood. A collection point in Cho Lon is being visited by over 300 people every day, among them many are constitutionally unfit.

in the free zone of South Viet Nam

(Concluded)

A deluge of fire

Further down in the plain, we witnessed the scene of true cataclysm (to which, unlike in the North, we had no reaction) all those sights being of the US-Saigon debacle. In the large periphery of Dong Ha, we saw, halted for ever in their race against life, caterpillars and tanks with guns shamefully pointed downward. Ai Tu was a vast airfield with all runways in metal; it came under successive onslaughts from the revolutionaries, and the Americans in their retreat from the base. Without taxing our imagination we could have an idea of the battles that took place there. What was the scene like? It was like elsewhere but of greater intensity: bomb craters, heaps of ruins and even spaces in between, not because levelled by some occult force but because new craters had filled up old ones. There was no quarter at Ai Tu. Ngo Dinh Diem used to say that "the frontiers at the United States extend up to the 17th parallel." His words have not been substantiated. Man, at time with the help of nature, closes the wounds caused by the deluge of fire and steel. We had to walk gingerly on the farms for everyone could get killed in a ricefield even after the restoration of peace. We should not venture out beyond the red and blue flags indicating the danger zones. Farming was hard for buffaloes had been massacred, some 76,000 or a large fraction of the hauling force of the region. On this score, as a Vietnamese saying goes, a buffalo is worth two soldiers. At present the people were striving to follow up their gains and strengthen unity. As a matter of fact, unity had been consolidated through the establishment of a State infrastructure in the course of the struggle. It rests on village, provincial and zonal committees. In all there are 2,000 revolutionary committees of village level, over 200 of district level and 6 for large cities — all of them democratically elected.

Springing from that broad basis, the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG) has been so far recognized by 33 countries and admitted a full member of the Non-Aligned Conference. The regime which has been set up, a projection of the future Southern society, is strengthening economically plan; the program of action of the NFL in agrarian matters meets the aspirations of the peasantry, leading to the gradual socialisation of agriculture, the main source of wealth of the liberated areas. The confiscated plantations, industrial crops and fruit-trees are first run by an NFL committee and will be later on entrusted to managers appointed by the PRG. The mutual-aid team formula seems to have been adopted. But is it not the first step toward agricultural cooperation? The agrarian question, more vital in that country than in any other one, is on its way to a solution, intense ideological work having reaped its fruit. The required conditions exist for productive forces in agriculture to develop. A big step has been made toward restoring to normal life in the liberated zone. This must set an example for those who do not live in the liberated zone and serve as a trump card for the political battle that has begun.

Concord thatch houses

We were in Viet Nam when a new agreement was signed to ensure the implementatian of the clauses contained in the first. We went up to the zone controlled by the PRG. A river named Thach Ai separated the revolutionaries from Thieu's men in their enclave. From time to time men of the two camps went down to fetch water from the river. One of our escorts said: "On certain days Saigon troops come to ask us to sell them vegetables. Nobody wants war." Once men of the two camps organized a football match. The new demarcation line has nothing in common with that of 1954. At Ben Nuoc, a place for prisoners' exchanges, however, the two sides are watchful in spite of the *détente*. Sentinels mount guard, krachnikovs and antitank rockets are within reach. 4 hours a day, from the other side they broadcast a music program in Vietnamese in "pop" style. In the evening, in what is dubbed "concord thatch houses" soldiers assemble. Those who come from the opposite side do so on the sly. Reunification has already begun -- at the level of privates and divided families.

A song and dance ensemble of Quang Binh (DRVN) had come to perform here and "was cheered by Thieu's soldiers"... That fraternization achieved in spite of all contingencies has caused alarm to the Saigon regime. It is known that Thieu does not allow his officers to get into touch with the revolutionaries at local-unit level evidently to make the Paris accord as less effective as possible, a particular point that has been an obstacle to the implementation of the first cease-fire.

Of all the lessons that we can draw from our trip in the liberated territory of South Viet Nam we shall remember the explaining and educational work that is thoroughly done by the militants of revolutionary committees among the population. Life in the liberated areas is healthy and contrasts with what is going on in the areas controlled by Thieu's troops. Socially tremendous progress should be mentioned: Schools have been opened "often heterogeneous" as an elementary school teacher of Gio Linh put it. They have had to struggle hard to blot out the sequels of the cheap education dispensed by the former occupants. In this respect many children lag behind. In the cultural field the NFL has undertaken the restoration and creation of an authentic, progressive national culture. It attaches importance, especially in the newly liberated areas, to cultural dealienation. The liquidation of illiteracy advances rapidly. We have seen continuation classes for grown-ups in roofless premises with walls bearing big holes.

As for health care, it has developed fairly enough to meet the needs of the resistance and preserve the health of the masses. At the sanitary station of Trieu Phong we saw, hanging side by side on a wall, a machinegun, a stethoscope and a guitar. A medical net work was set up during the war in the 18 villages of the district. "Our objective now is to provide care to the people," the physician in charge of the station told us and added that the Saigonese had used it "to nurse armymen and well-off people." We visited patients. Many patients suffering from internal diseases, "Saigon did not care for them" we were told: people wounded by steel pellet or magnetic bombs, or suffering from mental traumatism. We also noticed cases of neurasthenia whose causes were of a sentimental nature: entire separated families.

The newly-liberated areas have considerably narrowed down the zone under Thieu's control. The gradual normalization of the general situation in Indochina is also a major factor contributing to the settlement of the problems facing Viet Nam.

"We are ready to engage in the political battle," our interlocutors in the North or in the South often affirmed.

KAMAL ZEMOURI

(Special correspondent,
Révolution Africaine — Algeria)

Agricultural productive forces free to develop in the liberated zone

DRVN - GDR

Important height of close co-operation

AT the invitation of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Government of the German Democratic Republic, a delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam led by Pham Van Dong, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and Premier of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, paid an official visit to the German Democratic Republic from October 18 to 23, 1973.

The Party and Government delegation of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam laid wreaths at the Socialist Fighters' Monument at Berlin Friedrichfeld and the Memorial for the Soviet Army Heroes at Berlin Treptow.

In Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, the delegation attended a meeting of solidarity with the Vietnamese people. It paid homage to the heroes of the anti-fascist struggle at Buchenwald, toured a number of enterprises and historic spots in Erfurt and Potsdam provinces, cordially met with representatives of the people of various walks of life, and officers and combatants of the National Army of the German Democratic Republic. Wherever they went, the representatives of the Vietnamese people were accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome which is a splendid expression of the close friendship of the people of the German Democratic Republic to the fraternal Vietnamese people.

Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, had a friendly meeting with the Vietnamese delegation.

The Vietnamese delegation was received by, and had a cordial talk with, Willi Stoph, Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic.

The Party and Government delegation of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam had cordial talks with a delegation of the Party and the Government of the German Democratic Republic led by Horst Sindermann, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic.

The talks proceeded in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding. The two sides examined the situation and the tasks of the Vietnamese people in the new stage of struggle, discussed experiences of both countries in socialist construction, the further strengthening of the relations of friendship and co-ordination between the two Parties and the two countries and other questions of mutual concern.

The Vietnamese delegation gave an account of the situation in Viet Nam, the tasks of the Vietnamese people after the conclusion of the war and the restoration of peace in Viet Nam and problems relating to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the rehabilitation and development of the national economy and continuation of socialist construction in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

The delegation of the German Democratic Republic underscored the historic significance of the Vietnamese people's victorious resistance against US aggression, for national salvation. It expressed profound admiration for the indomitable spirit of the Vietnamese people, and its belief that with this spirit, under the leadership of the Viet Nam Workers' Party, and with the assistance and support of the fraternal socialist countries, of the international communist and workers' movement and of the national independence movements and the whole progressive mankind, the Vietnamese people will surely win complete victory in the struggle to ensure respect for their fundamental national rights and the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people.

The two sides regarded the victory of the Vietnamese people in the struggle against the imperialist aggression reflected in the signing of the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué of June 13, 1973 as an event of great significance for the consolidation of peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world.

The Vietnamese side informed its counterpart of the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué of June 13, 1973 and reaffirmed the firm stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam to strictly abide by and scrupulously implement the Paris Agreement and the Joint Communiqué and to demand that the United States and the Saigon administration do the same.

The German Democratic Republic fully supported this stand of the DRVN Government and the RSVN PRG, the sole authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people, and the June 28, 1973 Proposal of the RSVN PRG which conforms with the Paris Agreement and is aimed at solving the internal affairs of South Viet Nam by peaceful and democratic means in the spirit of national reconciliation and concord and on the basis of the recognition of the reality that there are in South Viet Nam two administrations, two armies, two zones of control, and three political forces.

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the GDR Government reaffirmed once again their determination to carry out its international obligation of rendering firm support and assistance to the fraternal Vietnamese people in all fields in their just struggle to ensure scrupulous implementation of the Paris Agreement, preserve and consolidate lasting peace in Viet Nam, successfully build socialism in North Viet Nam and achieve independence and democracy in South Viet Nam, on the path toward peaceful reunification of the country.

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the GDR Government will, now as in the future, continue developing and strengthening the friendly relations with the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front and the RSVN PRG whose international prestige has risen continually.

The GDR Party and Government delegation briefed its Vietnamese counterpart on the achievements gained in the implementation of the tasks and objectives laid down by the 8th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

The DRVN Party and Government delegation was gratified that the labouring people in the GDR under the leadership of the SUPG are successfully building the socialist society in their country. The all-sided gains by the GDR are the results of the imaginative application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, of the materialization of the universal laws on socialist construction as well as the close alliance and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

The two sides reaffirmed that the entry of the GDR into the United Nations and its equal participation in all international affairs reflect the increasing role and prestige of the socialist German state. The two delegations regarded this historic event as a reflection of the change of the balance of forces in the world in favour of peace, national independence, democracy and socialism. The great strength and the growing influence of the world socialist system has been a very important factor in this event.

As a result of the economic negotiations and of the fifth session of the Joint Economic Commission of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the German Democratic Republic, the two sides, during the delegation's friendship visit, arrived at important agreements.

The Vietnamese side highly appreciated the German Democratic Republic's precious support and assistance and expressed its firm belief that in the future too, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Government and people of the German Democratic Republic will continue reserving for the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause their powerful support.

The two delegations held that the visit to the German Democratic Republic by the delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Democratic Repulic of Viet Nam Government constitutes an important height of the close co-operation between the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, between the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the German Democratic Republic, and is an eloquent manifestation of the friendship and fraternal solidarity between the peoples of Viet Nam and the German Democratic Republic.

Cambodia:

99,120 enemy wiped out in the rainy season

IN one month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, the Cambodian liberation forces staged relentless, powerful and successful offensives on the Phnom Penh forces in all fronts, *AKI* reported.

In the areas around Phnom Penh, they continued their harassment and encirclement of the Vihear Souk military sub-sector and attacked enemy positions near Tak Mao townlet and the areas of Kompong Cham, Bek Chan, Ang Snoul, Thnan Tho Tung, driving adverse troops out of Highway N° 38 and the Southern sector of Prek Thnot river, controlling Highway N° 26, encircling Division 7 at Phnom Baset and Tuot Leap. They also cut strategic highways N° 4 (linking Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville) and N° 5 (linking Phnom Penh and Battambang) and the Mekong riverway. They also encircled, pounded and assaulted the enemy inside Kompong Thom, Siem Reap, Prey Veng, Svay Rieng, Kampot, Kompong Cham, Battambang, while intensifying guerilla activities everywhere. The enemy had to dig in their fortifications.

To sum up, in one month the Cambodian liberation forces knocked out 10,120 enemy (including 36 field and company officers), seized 2,300 arms of all kinds (including five 75mm recoilless guns, twenty five 80 and 60mm mortars and 34 machineguns), nearly 100 tons of war material, about 1 million cartridges of all sizes, 27 transceivers and 80 military vehicles; they damaged 12 aircraft, sent to the bottom 66 ships and launches, destroyed seven 105mm—127mm guns, 30 lorries, 11 tanks, levelled 47 military posts and depots, and blew up 2 bridges. 45,000 people were freed and taken to safety in the liberated areas.

AKI further reported that in the 6 months of the rainy season—from May to October 1973, the Cambodian Liberation forces wiped out 99,120 enemy (including 653 officers, heads of pacification teams and of inter-family groups), seized 27,693 arms of all kinds (including 14 guns and 403 mortars of all sizes, over 550 machineguns), 275 transceivers, 129 lorries and tractors, 1 warship, thousands of tons of ammunition and war material. They destroyed seven 105mm—127mm guns, 692 military vehicles (389 tanks and armoured cars), 3 electric generators, downed or damaged 191 aircraft, sank or hit 410 ships and launches, wrecked 22 bridges, captured 1,043 ennemy posts and destroyed 217 garrisons and depots. They also set free 240,000 people from the enemy grip and further enlarged the liberated zone

US-caused stalemate in Laos

MORE than one month has elapsed since the signing of the Protocol to the Vientiane Agreement, and yet no progress toward peace and national concord has been recorded. An agreement was reached after a series of meetings between the two Lao parties — the last one taking place on Oct. 11 — regarding the transportation to Vientiane and Luang Prabang of personnel and material of the patriotic forces, but it was violated by the Vientiane side right after the first flight on Oct. 12. The flights scheduled for Oct. 13 and 14 were postponed by request from the same side. Then, new provocations were staged by it: stones were placed on the runway and T.28s and C.130s circled overhead and dropped parachutes right at the moment when the planes carrying patriotic forces were about to land. On Oct. 19, the Vientiane side unilaterally cancelled the flights to transport patriotic forces to Vientiane and Luang Prabang. As an excuse for this arbitrary decision, it charged the Lao Patriotic Front, with introducing a big amount of arms into Vientiane, while in fact the number of personnel and material transported each day or in each flight was always notified in advance to the opposite side by the Head of the Delegation of the Patriotic Forces to the Joint Commission for the Implementation of the Agreement.

Apart from creating a serious impasse to the application of the Vientiane Agreement and its Protocol, other facts since the signing of the Protocol proved that the Vientiane side was continuously breaking its own pledges. Within one month — from September 14 to October 14 — *KPL* reported, it carried out 918 recon flights and 40 incursions into the patriots' territory and its planes bombed a number of localities in Xieng Khouang and Savannakhet provinces despite warnings by the patriotics forces and condemnation by public opinion at home and abroad.

It is now clear that, though forced by its own weakness and isolation and public pressure to sign the Vientiane Protocol the Vientiane side is still trying its best to preserve its privileges obtained through decades of subservience to the imperialists. So long as the US still nurtures neo-colonialist designs in Laos, its attempts to sabotage peace and national concord will continue.

In a mammoth rally held in honour of the 28th anniversary of the Proclamation of Independence of Laos (Oct. 12). Prince Souphanouvong, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front, poited out: "As the US imperialists are still reluctant to give up their 'Nixon Doctrine' and are trying to protect their selfish neo-colonialist interests in Laos, the peace conquired by the Lao people cannot be consolidated nor national concord achieved."

Were it not for the presence in Laos of thousands of US advisers and tens of thousands of Thai mercenaries, were it not for the huge amount of aid poured into Laos to keep a whole apparatus of pro-US agents, running the actions taken by Laos ultra-reactionaries would be simply unthinkable. Therein lies the deep root of the present-day tension and stalemate in Laos. No amount of falsifications and slanders heaped by the US and its lackeys would be able to hide the ugly colours of US imperialism, neither could it blur the radiating good will of the Lao patriotic forces as regards the achievement of peace and national concord in strict accordance with the spirit and letter of the Vientiane Agreement and its Protocol.

DINH BA

US PLANE DOWNED IN LAOS

INTERCEPTING a raid by ultrarightists on an area north of Seno, in Savanakhet province, on Oct. 25, the Lao Patriotic Forces shot down a C-47 cargo plane converted into bomber, according to *KPL*.

This was the 10th plane of the US and its henchmen downed in Laos since the signing of the Vientiane Agreement.

Agreement on Cultural Co-operation between RSVN PRG and Government of Hungarian People's Republic signed

RSVN Ambassador Nguyen Phu Soai, on behalf of the PRG of the RSVN and Doctor Orban Laszlo, Secretary of State in Charge of the Ministry of Culture of the Hungarian People's Republic on the afternoon of October 19, 1973 in Budapest signed an Agreement on Cultural Cooperation between the Republic of South Viet Nam and the Hungarian People's Republic.

Present at the ceremony, on the Vietnamese side were DRVN Ambassador to the HPR Nguyen Manh Cam and cadres of the RSVN Embassy in the HPR; on the Hungarian side were Messrs Roska Istvan, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Loerincz Tamas, Vice-Chairman of the Institute for Cultural Liaison with Foreign Countries.

Ambassador Nguyen Phu Soai and Mr Loerincz Tamas also signed a plan for the implementation of the abovementioned agreement in 1973.

In his speech at the ceremony, Doctor Orban Laszlo pointed out the significance of the signing of the Agreement on Cultural Cooperation between the RSVN and the HPR. He regarded it as a new step in the development of the friendship and solidarity between the Hungarian and South Vietnamese peoples.

"The South Vietnamese people have the rights to punish the nibbling operations conducted by the Saigon administration in the area under the control of the PRG of the RSVN to defend the liberated area and preserve a lasting peace in South Viet Nam," Doctor Orban Laszlo stressed.

in brief ★ in brief ★ in brief ★ in brief

— During an interview with the economic delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Repuplic of South Viet Nam on Oct. 20, Jozef Tejchma, Vice-Chairman of the Polish Council of Ministers, reaffirmed of his Government and people's active economic support and assistance to the PRG in healing the wounds of war and restoring life to normal in the areas under the PRG's control.

— The Finnish Peace Committee and the Finnish Vietnamese Society jointly sponsored a "Peace Week" from October 8 to 14 in almost all big cities in Finland. Dozens of meetings took place with 30,000 banners and 300,000 leaflets calling for solidarity with, and support to Viet Nam.

On October 10, Viet Nam Day, about 50,000 pupils, students, youths and workers collected some 500,000 marks, and 200,000 signatures to the appeal to the Finnish people for stronger support to the Vietnamese people, and to Saigon for the immediate release of the political prisoners still held by it.

A 6,000-strong meeting wound up the "Peace Week".

— The Kent Council for Peace in Viet Nam recently launched a campaign for US-Thieu strict implemention the Paris Agreement and immediate release of the 200,000 political prisoners still detained in Saigon's jails. The Council has presented the Vietnamese with a cardio-radioscope. Meanwhile, the British Medical Aid Viet Nam Committee organized concerts and earned nearly 1,000 pounds for purchase of medicaments and medical appliances for the Vietnamese.

— The newly set-up Belgium-Viet Nam Association headed by Professor François Houtart held a day of teach-in on the Viet Nam situation in Brussels on October 14. It also adopted a political program and a plan of action.

— An exhibition of photos (including colour ones) on Viet Nam was inaugurated in Bratislava, capital the Socialist Republic of Slovakia. The exhibits depicted the industrious and creative labour of the Vietnamese in their national reconstruction.

— Representatives of the working class from 93 countries taking part in the 8th Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions held in Varna (Bulgaria) from October 15 to 22, approved a resolation calling for solidarity with, and support to, the present effort of the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia. The document urged the working people and the trade unions of all countries to stand solid behind the labourers and peoples of Indochina.

— In their statement issued on October 20, 52 French organizations condemned the Saigon administration's detention of 200,000 political prisoners and arrests of dozens of thousands of more Vietnamese militants for peace, reconciliation and national concord.

The organizations asked the French government to intercede and pressure the Thieu administration into implementing strictly the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

— The Danish Committee for Solidarity with Indochina held a meeting on October 22 expressing solidarity with and support to, the Indochinese peoples' struggle against American imperialism. The Committee has also donated to the Information Bureau of the PRG of the RSVN in Denmark, and the DRVN respectively 35,000 kroners and 10,000 kroners, proceeds of its collections.

— On October 27, the closing of the Viet Nam Week in Sweden, mass meetings and demonstrations in support of Viet Nam were held in 150 places throughout the country by more than 40 mass organizations.

The participants demanded that the US and the Saigon administration stop violating the Paris Agreemant and release all the more than 200,000 political prisoners still detained by the Saigon regime.

— The same day, Stockholm saw as many as 4,000 demonstrators, carrying flags of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, march the downtown streets before gathering in front of the Parliament building.

SOUTH VIET NAM CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION